

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Costa Rica

Post: San Jose

Impact of Heavy Rains in Costa Rican Ag Sector

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

The report summarizes the effects of heavy rains during the month of September on the Costa Rican agricultural sector.

General Information:
Impact of Heavy Rains in Costa Rican Agricultural Sector

The heavy rains of September affected primarily the horticultural sector. Damage to lettuce, tomato, cabbage, and sweet pepper plantations is estimated at 380 hectares by the Ministry of Agriculture, and could result in higher domestic prices for those products until at least January. No shortage or lack of produce, including potatoes, is expected. However, FAS was contacted by an importer who is trying to make contacts for potential potato imports if they are needed down the road. Dairy producers reported preliminary losses of colones 42 million (\$82,000) mostly as a result of blocked roads in some areas and delays in milk delivery. More resilient products such as coffee, sugar, and rice, have not reported losses so far. Banana production was not affected by the bad weather, which was concentrated in the Pacific and Central Valley areas (bananas are grown only in the Atlantic). The rain resulted in increased incidence of a fungus known as ojo de gallo in coffee plantations (government estimates say it is affecting 20,000 ha. at different degrees), however, the month of November and December will be more important since that is when the harvest begins. Heavy rains at that time could cause harvest-related problems. Coffee production in the next harvest (2011/2012) could be affected as a result of the increased incidence of fungi, but it is too early to tell what will be the actual effect. Moreover, ojo de gallo typically affects coffee in Costa Rica during the rainy season.

The government included agriculture in an emergency decree but the purpose of that is to be able to circumvent some of the time consuming procedures necessary to allocate resources mainly to infrastructure (road and bridge repairs for instance). The weather has been good during the last 10 days and this is helping producers to get back to their regular activities.